



**THE KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NEWS RELEASE Q&A**

Date January 7, 2005

Contact Sally Lunsford, Kansas Department of Commerce
Phone: (785) 296-2477
e-mail: slunsford@kansascommerce.com

Materials available at: www.thinkkansas.com/newsroom

BRAND IMAGE EXPLANATIONS

What do you mean by brand image? What is the difference between brand image and the state slogan?

Brand image is what people think of when they hear your name. It's a promise of what can be expected from Kansas. It is a reflection of core values and a way to distinguish Kansas from others in a way that is authentic and meaningful. Brand image is built over time and requires a long-term commitment to consistently communicate a promise.

The Kansas slogan or tagline is only *one* of the many expressions of the state's brand image, and it should support and reinforce the image.

Why is it important to develop a brand image for Kansas?

The average American is exposed to over 3,000 advertising messages every day. In order to break through the clutter and have people even think about Kansas, let alone consider it as a business location or travel destination, it must have a strong image that people can rely on. A well-executed brand image can differentiate Kansas from other states and serve as a regional, national, and international symbol that builds trust and credibility in what the state has to offer.

Is Kansas on the cutting edge of brand image development, or are we playing catch-up with other states?

The proliferation of messages and the thousands of ways to communicate with people have caused marketers to try and find new ways to reach their audiences. Private sector companies have long realized the power of a strong brand. There are a few states that have developed positioning that has stood the test of time for over 25 years, such as "I Love NY" and "Virginia is for Lovers." This being said, Kansas is not actually playing catch-up. Very few states have developed a consistent state image designed for both business development and tourism. (Kentucky and Oregon are two who have recently launched statewide image campaigns.) Very few states have made a statewide effort to develop the core values that form the promise their state has to offer. Very few states have sustained a consistent brand image over time.

What are the goals of the brand image campaign?

The goals of the campaign are to begin to change the way Kansans talk about Kansas, to change the way out-of-state people think and talk about Kansas, and to ultimately create new jobs, new capital investments, and increase the economic impact of tourism in the state.

How does this compare to the state's past efforts?

This branding effort does not really compare to past efforts. Tourism has developed its own promotions and business development has communicated different messages. For example, the most recent tourism tagline is "Simply Wonderful," and the current business development tagline is "Built on Character." The new branding effort will communicate one consistent message for Kansas, not just for tourism and business development, but for the entire state. Our hope is that it will become a part of all Kansas marketing and communications and tie in with what all communities and state agencies are doing. We have limited dollars and the more we can communicate one consistent brand, the more successful we will be.

In addition, this campaign has been based on research that has been critical in developing an image that is not only believable, but one that is meaningful to our target audiences. Business and travel customers were surveyed, and extensive quantitative and qualitative research was conducted in order to ensure that creative, conceptual, and strategic elements of the campaign reflect what Kansas really offers those markets and what distinguishes Kansas in those markets.

WHAT KANSAS HAS TO OFFER

What does Kansas have to promote to tourists and business executives?

The hottest trends in travel today are things that abound in Kansas. Our state offers activities such as historic and cultural events; agri-tourism, or the "city-slicker" syndrome, where people want to experience working farms and ranches; geo-tourism, where people want to experience preserved natural, historic, and cultural sites with outstanding scenery; and last but not least, authentic activities—tired of "plastic" fun, travelers desire to experience the real America.

And when it comes to commerce and economic development, Kansas has what today's businesses are after: a trained workforce with a can-do work ethic that allows businesses to thrive, an entrepreneurial spirit, competitive costs of doing business, an excellent quality of life, strong infrastructure, and the land and space to grow.

Aren't businesses really looking for incentives and lower costs of doing business?

Businesses must think about the bottom line and often need incentives to get started in a new location. Many states offer very competitive deals, so in order to be a player, we must roll up our sleeves to make doing business in Kansas easy and profitable. We must also stand for something meaningful that distinguishes us from other states in order for prospective businesses and their employees to want to consider Kansas as a place to live, work, and play. Building that kind of positive image takes a long-term commitment to telling a consistent story.

COSTS

What is the budget for the state image work?

The 2004 Legislature appropriated \$700,000 for the state image work. In addition, the Kansas Department of Commerce allocated \$1,000,000 from its internal marketing budgets, including \$300,000 received from KDOT's Blue-Sign proceeds.

What does the \$1,700,000 pay for?

The budget is allocated for the following activities: extensive research and development of the overall brand image; development of an overall marketing plan for in-state promotion and out-of-state business development and tourism promotion; development of creative elements supporting the brand including logo and tagline; television, radio, theater and print advertisements; media placement both in-state and out-of-state for all of 2005; the development of graphic standards, co-op guidelines and programs that can be used by Kansas communities; public relations and the development of a state web portal, www.thinkkansas.com; and various other marketing materials.

How does this compare to other states' spending to promote their states?

Kansas has consistently ranked as one of the lowest in spending for marketing the state. This budget still puts us as one of the lowest five states in marketing spending.

Will you be asking the Legislature for more money to promote the state?

In order to build a long-term, consistent brand image and get people to notice the great things going on in Kansas, the state will need to make a commitment to spending at least a minimum amount to get our message out. We will continue to ask the Legislature to help Kansas compete more favorably in spending to market a strong, consistent brand image.

What outside contractors were used to develop and implement the brand image work?

Primarily Callahan Creek, a Lawrence marketing company. Other outside contractors included Ruf Strategic Solutions, an Olathe firm (database analytics).

THE PROCESS

What is the Kansas Brand Image Task Force and why was it formed?

The Kansas Brand Image Task Force was developed as a direct result of recommendations made by the 2003 Prosperity Summits. The Prosperity Summits, made up of business people from every region of the state, identified key priorities for economic growth in the state of Kansas, the most consistent being the need for a strong state image. Community, business development, and tourism leaders from throughout the state make up the Kansas Brand Image Task Force, representing each of the Prosperity Summit regions.

What did the Task Force do?

Members of the Task Force participated in a process to articulate the essence of the Kansas brand through an authentic statement of Core Values, the first stage in creating the critical components necessary for an effective brand image. Task Force members engaged in full-day working sessions in Salina on April 6, April 27, May 20, September 2, October 28, and November 30.

What kind of research was conducted?

In addition to research conducted with Task Force members, the Kansas Department of Commerce conducted extensive research to identify out-of-state perceptions, attitudes, and opinions about the state. Research included qualitative interviews with business development consultants, out-of-state consumers, travel writers, and key legislators. Quantitative studies were conducted with Kansas travelers and a cross-section of out-of-state consumers. A competitive analysis of other states' efforts was conducted, and secondary research was evaluated to assess the primary opportunities for Kansas. Optional state taglines were tested with an online e-mail panel.

What did you find out from the research?

The research produced a great wealth of knowledge with regard to attitudes about, and perceptions of, Kansas. It is impossible to summarize all the information gleaned in a few sentences without compromising the results. However, in an attempt to encapsulate a few key findings: Kansans view Kansas as the center of America where you can still trust a handshake, and get things done. It's a place where our limitless horizons beg us to dream and create. Many Kansans appreciate our rich history, and recognize that we have often been on the cutting edge of cultural change and conflict.

Out-of-state business people and consumers often have an unclear image of Kansas. They see Kansans as honest, trustworthy, hardworking, and friendly. Their image of Kansas is flat, with wide open spaces, and when they visit they are often surprised by its green rolling hills. Visitors most enjoy Kansas' historic attractions.

IMPLEMENTATION

How will the new state image be promoted?

The state image will be introduced in Kansas beginning in January. The image will then be used to promote tourism and business development. In addition, the Task Force will work to incorporate the state image into regional and community efforts.

Why is the state spending money to promote the image within Kansas?

Strong brands are built from the inside out. The goal is for Kansans to take pride in and appreciate the many benefits of living, working, and traveling in the state. It is important to keep talented, educated, and trained Kansans in the state, and educating them on the many opportunities the state holds for them may motivate them to stay. We also need to help Kansas companies grow and expand in Kansas and provide Kansans with a view of the many travel and leisure activities the state has to offer. Building pride and appreciation for these things within Kansas ultimately increases jobs, capital investment, and tourism spending in the state.

What will you be promoting and who is the audience?

In Kansas, our story will focus on famous Kansans whose lives have been shaped by living here. Kansans who dared to think big and make a difference in the world. The introduction campaign will feature Dwight Eisenhower and Amelia Earhart. Over time, we will consider other Kansans, including contemporary figures.

Our tourism ads will feature areas of interest to travelers today. A series of three ads will feature historic experiences, off-the-beaten path adventures, and experiential trips such as working ranches.

Our tourism audience is made up of people who are looking for the kinds of experiences Kansas has to offer: history, arts and culture, agri-tourism experiences, geo-tourism experiences, authentic experiences. Bringing out-of-state travelers to Kansas adds tremendous revenue to the state and creates jobs for Kansans. In addition, research indicates that when people actually travel to Kansas, the image of the state improves substantially. The new state image offers us a consistent way to tell the Kansas story to prospective travelers. Ads will be placed in travel-related publications. We will also be looking at more targeted approaches to reach people who are looking for the kinds of experiences Kansas has to offer.

Business development marketing will include site location consultants' events, trade shows, and advertising featuring Kansas companies and entrepreneurs who have dared to dream big and create successful companies in Kansas. Innovative products and things you wouldn't expect to have been produced in Kansas will be featured.

Business development audiences: The Kansas Department of Commerce will incorporate the new state image in all communications and marketing efforts with this important audience of out-of-state business executives and site location consultants. The state has a positive business climate with many opportunities for new companies to thrive and succeed. There are many examples of innovative companies locating in Kansas due to our trained workforce, strong work ethic, and favorable business climate. We need to tell our stories in a way that motivates other companies to create their own success stories in Kansas. This means new jobs, new opportunities for Kansans, increased capital expenditures, and an increased tax base. With limited dollars, we will focus on the most effective ways to reach this audience.